

Liminal Space and Water in *The Wee Free Men* By Terry Pratchett

What length would you go to, to protect your younger brother? Even an annoying one whom you aren't actually so fond of? This question encompasses reader's minds as they track alongside Tiffany Aching in Terry Pratchett's novel, *The Wee Free Men*. Although saving her younger brother from the mythical creatures of Fairy Land is what draws Tiffany into this otherworldly adventure, so much more than rescue transpires between the pages of prose, which Pratchett constructs. On the surface, Tiffany Aching journeys through a strange, magical place in search of a family member. However, readers can ascertain that the young girl's involvement with magical elements brings her into a liminal space, that's perceived as a quest space, in which time and space behave differently. Throughout the novel, Tiffany, whose name the feegles translate as meaning, "Land under Wave" harnesses the power of liminality through water and history. She does this to bring her brother home, but also discover her own identity.

When considering Tiffany Aching and her particularly unique liminal experience, it may be helpful to consider Michael Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope. Chronotope literally means "time-space" and in his essay, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" Bakhtin says,

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope" (Bakhtin 86).

Bakhtin establishes multiple chronotopes throughout his essay such as "adventure time" and "chronotope of the road" that are ultimately characterized by the differing ways in which time and space relate and react to one another within the novel. Bakhtin implies that there could be a chronotope for each type of literature, and an interesting case could be made for Pratchett's novel. The chronotope of *The Wee Free Men* functions to pave a path to identity by exposing, as well as estranging, Tiffany Aching to and from multiples times and spaces.